1588

A SERMON AGAINST *Profaneneſs & Immorality.*

Preach'd at the

ASSIZES

AT

KINGSTON upon *THAMES*,

APRIL 9. 1701.

BEFORE THE

Right Honourable the Lord Chief Juſtice *HOLT*, and the Honourable Baron *TRACY*.

By *THO. KNAGGS*, M.A.

AND

Chaplain to the Right Honourable *Ford* Earl of *Tankerville*, Lord Privy Seal.

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1156

BRITISH MUSEUM

TO

JOHN SHORTER, Esq;

HIGH SHERIFF

OF

SURRY,

THIS

SERMON

IS

HUMBLY DEDICATED,

BY HIS

Most Obedient Servant,

Tho. Knaggs.

A SERMON AGAINST *Profaneneſs* and *Immorality.*

HEB. iv. *v.* 13.

Neither is there any Creature that is not manifeſt in his Sight: But all things are naked, and opened unto the Eyes of him with whom we have to do.

THere cannot be a more powerful Perſwaſive, or a more effectual Charm to oblige Men to the Practice of Holineſs, and infuſe a Spirit of exact Conſcientiouſneſs into them; than a ſerious Conſideration that God is every where preſent. That our

our rising in the Morning, our labours in the Day, and our lying down at Night, are all manifest in his Sight, and under the All-seeing Eye of Heaven. That he discovers us as easily under the dark Shadows of the Night as at Noon-day, and that his Eye-beams pierce into the deep of our Thoughts, Ends and Designs. It was a common thing among the *Romans* to check any Extravagancy they were entring upon by saying, *Cato sees you.* This *Cato* being by Office, the *Censor* of Mens Behaviour, and much Reverenc'd by the People, they were afraid to come under his Reproof, as suspecting his Eye by one means or other was every where. Now if they fear'd the Eye of *Cato*, who was but a Mortal Man, and who could but inflict a Temporal Punishment upon them; Surely ye ought to dread the Eye of God, who is an Immortal Being, an Impartial Judge, and can Punish both Body and Soul in Endless and Everlasting Misery. 'Twas
Lib. 6. c. 14. an admirable saying of *Lactantius*, *Let no Man flatter himself in his Wickedness, for want of a Witness; for God is Omniscient, and to him nothing can be a Secret:* And *Seneca* a Heathen, speaks in the same Language; *God is a Great and Omnipotent Being, it is to him that we live, and to him that we must approve our selves. What doth it avail us then that our Consciences are hid from Men, when our Souls are Naked and lie open to God?*

Psal. 139. Holy *David* cries out, *Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy Presence?*

If

If I Aſcend up to Heaven, thou art there; if I go down into Hell, thou art there alſo; if I take the Wings of the Morning and dwell in the uttermoſt part of the Sea, even there ſhall thy hand lead me, and thy Right-hand ſhall hold me; if I ſay the Darkneſs ſhall cover me, even the Night ſhall be Light about me; yea the Darkneſs is no Darkneſs with thee, but the Night is as clear as the Day, the Darkneſs and Light to thee are both alike. The Eyes of the Prov. 15. 3. *Lord are in every place, beholding the Evil and the Good. Neither is there any Creature that is not manifeſt in his Sight: But all things are naked and opened unto the Eyes of him with whom we have to do.*

My deſign in this Diſcourſe is to promote the Intereſt of Religion, to diſcourage and ſuppreſs *Prophaneneſs* and *Immorality*, to reſtrain Vice and Debauchery, and encourage a *Reformation* of Manners. The Publick Intereſt calls aloud for it; for if the foundations of *Faith*, *Righteouſneſs* and *Good Life* be not ſecur'd by the due Execution of the Laws, we muſt not expect *Truth* and *Peace* long amongſt us. The moſt likely way to prevent the *Deſtroying Angel's* drawing his Sword, is for the Magiſtrate to *Unſheath* his againſt *Profaneneſs* and *Immorality*. And may a Bleſſing light on that Man's head who takes care to correct Sin, and ſet up the Power of Godlineſs in its room. Good Men will highly applaud him here, and God will ſurely reward him hereafter.

A *Reformation* of Manners is the only thing to make us an happy People. High and Low, Rich and Poor, Young and Old, Superiours and Inferiours are all concern'd in this *Honourable* and *Neceſſary* Work to mend one.

One of the greateſt Incouragements *Popery* ever met with in *England* was from the *Sins* of *England*. And therefore if we wou'd preſerve our Holy Religion, and deliver it down in purity to Poſterity; If we have any deſire to *Exalt* our Nation, win the Lord to make our Councils Proſperous and our Deſigns Succeſsful, we muſt ſeriouſly and in good Earneſt ſet about Amendment and Newneſs of Life, turn the Sins of *Profaneneſs*, *Irreverence* and *Irreligion* out of the Kingdom, and ſet up *Piety*, *Religion*, and *Devotion* in their Places.

King William. We live under the Government of a moſt *Religious* and *Gracious* King, who has not only deliver'd your Bodies, but endeavours as much as in him lies to ſave your Souls. And in order thereto, not only ſhews his Subjects an Example of Piety and Religion, but by *Proclamation* ſtrictly requires the ſame of them. As a Maſter of a Family is, ſo commonly are his Servants. If he Swears they learn to Swear too. If he be Wicked, they for the moſt part are ſo likewiſe. And then what has that Parent, that Maſter to Anſwer for, who by their bad Examples have been

been the betrayers and loſers of the Souls of their Children and Servants?

'Tis in vain to Expect pure Streams from a polluted Fountain. Unleſs *Parents*, *Maſters*, *Governours* and *Magiſtrates* reform themſelves, we may Deſpair of ever ſeeing a Reformation in the State. 'Tis too ſad a Truth that *Profaneneſs* and *Immorality* meet with too many great Examples to incourage them, and while the Head is Sick, the whole Body will be Heavy. If the Fountain be Muddy, 'tis in vain to cleanſe the Channel, and if Men in Authority break the Law, they of inferiour Rank will think they may do ſo too. For how can that Magiſtrate put the Laws in Execution who is a daily Criminal himſelf? Or with what face can that *Juſtice of Peace* make another pay for Swearing, who is a common Swearer himſelf? Such Men with *David* in *Nathan*'s Parable, pronounce the Sentence of their own Condemnation. In Reforming others they accuſe themſelves, and inſtead of ſuppreſſing *Profaneneſs* and *Immorality* they become Approvers of them.

I pray God make a *Reformation* in all Orders and Degrees of Men among us. The Sins of Men were never greater, never cry'd louder to Heaven for Vengeance than they do at this Day. Becauſe of them our *Land* has long *Mourn'd*, and *Mourn* we may Expect it will a great deal worſe, if Men go on in their Wickedneſs, and

tempt God by their ſawcy Profanations to ſend down his Judgments upon it.

Into ſuch deſperate and forlorn Times are we fal'n, that many are as far from Goodneſs as they are from Shame. The *Whore's forehead*, and the *Brow of Braſs* complain'd of in the Prophets is to the diſgrace of our Nation, and to the Scandal of our Holy Religion, too much the Temper and Complexion of this Generation. Are there not ſome that boaſt of their Sins that Moral *Heathens* wou'd even bluſh to Name? *Shall I not viſit for theſe things ſaith the Lord? Shall not my Soul be avenged on ſuch a People?* What can we expect the End of theſe things ſhould be but Deſtruction? In Mercy, O God, awaken us all, leſt the loud Calls of his Judgments rouze us!

Now what better Argument can be made uſe of for a *Reformation* of Manners, and promoting Religion, Honeſty and fair Dealing, than to fix on Mens Souls a deep Impreſſion of God's *Omnipreſence?*

I. If God be *Omnipreſent*, and if there be not any Creature but what is manifeſt in his Sight, then he knows all the *Evil* we do, and all the *Good* we do; and therefore this ſhould be a Reſtraint to keep us from Sin, and an Inducement to walk uprightly both before God and Man.

If

If we Smite our Neighbour ſecretly, and Wound him with an Arrow that flies in the Dark; If we lay our Plot never ſo ſlightly, and ſay to our ſelves no Man ſees us, and therefore we ſhall prevail againſt him; yet notwithſtanding this our Secret and Private Wickedneſs, there is an Eye in Heaven, an Omniſcient God who ſees through the Clouds, and looks down from his High and Holy Habitation upon all the Dwellers upon Earth, and beholds them in their moſt ſubtle Diſguiſes, and one Day in the Sight of Men and Angels, will be both their Witneſs, and their Judge. Privacy and Secrecy are no hindrances to the Sight of God, to whoſe Eyes all things are Naked and Open. And tho' the Night conceals the *Drunkard*, and the Cloſet the *Adulterer*: Tho' the *Thief* lurks and hides himſelf in Secret Places, that he may the better eſcape the Hands of Men, and his Theft not be found out, and accordingly Puniſh'd at the Bar of an Earthly Tribunal; yet let all ſuch Sinners reſt aſſur'd that as certain as they Sin'd, ſo certain God had his Eye upon them, and ſaw them at the very inſtant they committed their Wickedneſs. *Am I a God at hand, and not a God afar off? Saith the Lord. Can any hide himſelf in Secret Places, that I ſhall not ſee him? Do not I fill Heaven and Earth? How can I do this great Wickedneſs and Sin againſt God*, was *Joſeph*'s Cry when his Laſcivious Miſtreſs would have Tempted him to unlawful Embraces? The Conſideration of God's *Omnipreſence* kept him Innocent, Imprint- Gen 39. 9.

printed the fear of God in his Heart, Repel'd the Temptation, and preserv'd his Integrity against all her Caresses and Blandishments. *A Man that breaketh Wedlock, saying thus in his Heart, who seeth Me? I am compassed about with Darkness: The Walls cover me, and no Body sees Me, what need I fear? The most High will not remember my Sins: Such a Man feareth only the Eyes of Men, and knoweth not that the Eyes of the Lord are Ten thousand times brighter than the Sun, beholding all the Ways of Men, and considering the most secret Parts.* I know not any thing that tends more to the letting Men loose to all manner of Wickedness, than the want of an apprehension of God's *Omnipresence*. *The Iniquity of the House of* Judah *is exceeding great, and the Land is full of Blood, and the City full of perverseness, and all this comes to pass because they say, the Lord hath forsaken the Earth, the Lord seeth not.*

Ecclus. 23. 18, 19.

When any Temptation offers it self, Expostulate thus with your selves. What am I about to do? What Wickedness is this I am going to commit? Am I not in the presence of my God? Doth not he stand by me and cast his Eye upon me? And should he strike me Dead in the very Action, what a miserable State and Condition would I be in? What a deplorable Darkness would your Souls be hurry'd into, should Death close your Eyes and send you to Judgment at the very instant you are committing such or such a Sin. Did the Cannon-Mouth'd Swearer consider, that the Ears of an *Omnipresent* God are open, and hears him as oft as

as he takes the *Holy and Reverend Name* of God in vain, and that for any thing he knows his Breath may be ſtop'd, when the Oath is between his Lips; certainly he would keep his Tongue with all Diligence, and never dare to open his Mouth wide againſt Heaven, and Profane the Great and Tremendous Name of God, which the Angels with the profoundeſt Submiſſion Magnifie and Adore.

Did the unjuſt and mercileſs Man who hath Enrich'd himſelf by *Rapine*, *Oppreſſion* and *Extortion*, and grown Fat with Enjoyments and Poſſeſſions wrongfully got from the Widow and Fatherleſs, take it into ſerious Conſideration that God did not caſt a Superficial glance, that his Eye did not ſlide upon the Surface of his Actions, but pierc'd through and through him, and at the great Diſtinguiſhing Day will be a ſevere Revenger of the Wrongs offer'd unto them; he would make them ſatisfaction in this World, to prevent the Divine Juſtice from meeting with them in that which is to come.

No ſooner did Chriſt caſt his Eyes upon St. *Peter* after he had denied him, but he went out of the High Prieſt's Hall and *Wept bitterly.* And if Men could once be brought to a ſerious Thought that they are continually under the Eye of Heaven, it would put a Reſtraint upon their Ways, and be a powerful Motive to a Good and Virtuous Life. Holy *David* attributes his keeping

ing God's Precepts and Teſtimonies to the lively Sence he had, that his Ways were always before God. *My Soul hath kept thy Teſtimonies, and I love them exceedingly. I have kept thy Precepts and thy Teſtimonies, for all my ways are before thee.* God's Allſeeing Preſence would of neceſſity work upon Men to *ceaſe to do Evil, and learn to do well*, if they were but once fully perſwaded that they are continually under the Eye of him, who is the Inſpector and Judge of all their Actions.

Pſal. 119. 167, 168.

What a Virtuous Life doth that Man lead who ſo ordereth his Converſation as one that Believes God perpetually ſtands by? How Regular and Exemplary is his Converſation? How Circumſpect in all his Actions? And how is the Fear of God in his Heart all the Day long?

Among the many Excellent Rules which *Seneca* has given for the Conduct of Mens Lives, this is one, *viz.* That they ſhould always imagine ſome Grave and Virtuous Perſon, and to repreſent him to be preſent with them, as a Spectator of all their Actions. And I have Read of one who gave this Advice to a Friend of his, who had given himſelf up to a reprobate Mind, to a neglect of all Religion and Virtue, and was loſt to all Sence and Goodneſs, *viz.* That he ſhould hang his Father's Picture in the Room where he was wont to act his Debauchery, imagining the ſevere Eye of the Father, tho' but *in Effigie*, would give a mighty check to his lewd Life and corrupt Manners.

Now

Now if the bare Repreſentation of ſome Grave and Virtuous Perſon being preſent with us, or a Father's being only in a Dead Picture, may be ſuppos'd to have ſo ſtrong an influence on our Actions, as to give a ſtrong Check to Lewdneſs and Debauchery, of how much greater force then muſt the Sence of God's Preſence continually with us be to Regulate our Lives and Actions?

And as God's *Omnipreſence* ſhould lay a Reſtraint upon Men, to keep them from Sin, and be an Encouragement to a Good and Holy Life; So,

II. This ſhould Teach them Uprightneſs, and an exact Conſcientiouſneſs in all their Dealings.

Many Men venture in Private upon Sins which they dare not do in Publick. They dread more the Laws of the Land, than thoſe of the great God, and are more afraid to be taken committing Crimes for which they are accountable at an Earthly Bar, than for thoſe they muſt be Judg'd for at a Heavenly one. They ſtand more in awe of Man than God, as if they were never to Die, and make no appearance in the Court of Heaven. The fear of Puniſhment, and the loſs of Reputation, keeps many Men from openly committing Murder, Theft, and other Villanies, but when they are out of the Sight of Men,

then they appear what they are. Thoſe who went for *Saints* in Publick become *Devils* in Private. Many *Phariſees* put on Sheeps Cloathing abroad, but at home they are Ravenous Wolves. If ye ſecretly Wound your Neighbour, Steal his Goods, or the like, tho' the World know it not, can you think to keep it ſecret from Him to whom all things are open and naked? A Lie from an Impudent Face, may eaſily delude an Innocent Perſon, but the Strength of *Iſrael* is not a Man that he ſhould Lie, or the Son of Man that he
2 K. 5. 25. ſhould be deceiv'd. *Gehazi* fear'd his Maſter's Anger, and ſo told a Lie to prevent it, but he was not afraid to Lie in the Sight of God, for which he was Puniſh'd with Leproſie. Tho' his Maſter could not find it out; yet God did, and
Acts 5. 5. Puniſh'd him for it. *Ananias* and *Sapphira* intending by falſhood to abuſe God, fell under his heavy Vengeance for the ſame, and by their ſudden Death manifeſted the Power of the Holy Ghoſt whom they thought to deceive. Secure thy ſelf as well as thou canſt, and keep thy Wickedneſs as ſecret as may be; yet know there is no Security, no Secreſie againſt God. He will Hunt thee in all thy By-paths, Trace thee in all thy crooked Steps, Diſcover all thy Shifts, Diſcern all thy Lies, and Confute all thy Pollicies. The Eyes of the great Judge of Heaven and Earth cannot be Blinded. He will bring to light the hidden things of Darkneſs, and make manifeſt the Counſels of the Heart. He will ſet before the Eyes of all, the ſecret Sins of every Man. *They ſhall*

be-

befool themſelves that have digged deep to hide their Counſel from the Lord, and have ſaid of their Works of Darkneſs, Who ſeeth us? When they caſt up the account of their Sins, they ſhall come with Fear, and their own Iniquities ſhall convince them to their Face. What Man would dare to bear Falſe Witneſs or to take a falſe Oath at an Earthly Bar, or before an Earthly Judge, was he but ſenſible that he muſt appear at an Heavenly Tribunal, before an Eternal Judge, who will Judge him in Righteouſneſs, and give him according to his Ways, and the Fruit of his doings? A Judge infinitely Wiſe, infinitely Juſt, and infinitely Powerful. Before no leſs Perſon muſt the whole Race of Mankind ſtand forth to be tried for Eternity. With that God we ſhall all have to do. A God that can Save or Deſtroy. A Judge that can Acquit or Condemn. Wiſd. 4. 20.

And here *I charge you before God and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, that with all haſte you ſet your ſelves to ponder on theſe things. Ask your Souls this Queſtion. Is God every where preſent? Is his Eye always upon us? Does he Search and know the Heart? Has he been a Spectator of all your Wickedneſs, and beheld you in the midſt of your Tranſgreſſions, And will he bring you to Judgment to anſwer for every thing ye have done amiſs? Away then with all manner of Falſhood, Deceit, and every thing that ſavours of Diſhoneſty. Have ye ſinned, do ſo no more? For the time to come, be afraid to Sin in Secret, becauſe

1 Sam. 26. 7. *all things are Naked and Opened unto the Eyes of him with whom ye have to do. Man looketh upon the outward appearance, but God looketh on the Heart. Doubtless there is a God that Judgeth the Earth.* And therefore let this caution be Imprinted upon your Hearts at all times and in all Places, *have a care what ye do, God sees. We are under a great Obligation to live justly, seeing we do all things before the Eyes of that Judge that seeth all.* What a strong Cordial will it be to the Soul at her separation from the Body when she can say with *Hezekiah*, *Remember now, O Lord, how I have walked before thee in Truth and with a perfect Heart, and have done that which was good in thy Sight.* With what Peace and Tranquility of Soul doth an honest Conscientious Man go out of the World, and resign it up into his Creator's Hands? For having liv'd under a constant awe of the Divine Majesty in this World, he embraceth Death with a cheerful Mind, and is ready to say, *Go forth my Soul, Go forth*, I have all along had to do with a God as a Being *Omnipresent*, and *Omniscient*, and now I am not afraid to do with him as a Righteous Judge, who is to determine the Eternal State of my Soul, and pass an unalterable Sentence upon it. How will it comfort a Man when Death looks him in the Face, that he was sensible God always saw him, and thereupon set a Watch upon his Actions, as being fully convinc'd he had to do with a God who was a Witness to all he did, and would one Day Judge him for all his Actions. We must all of us one Day bid adieu to the World, and then the best

Boetius.

Isai. 38. 3.

Pil-

how to lay a Dying Head on will be a good Conſcience. If we have not that, all the Glories of the Earth will but afford ſmall Comfort when our Breath is juſt going from us, and our Souls ready to take their flight from our trembling Lips.

I know nothing would conduce more to the infuſing a Spirit of exact Conſcientiouſneſs into us, than the Conſideration of God's *Omnipreſence* and *Omniſcience*. For the more the fear of God rules in our Hearts, the more exact we ſhall be in our Religion towards God, and in our Converſation among Men. 'Tis uſual with Men when they are caſt upon a Bed of Sickneſs, and the Viſions of Death and the Grave are before them, then to make Conſcience of their ways, to Dedicate themſelves to God, and to be open and fair in their Dealings with Men. When they ſee they muſt die and appear before a Righteous Tribunal to have their Everlaſting State and Condition determin'd, then they are for doing nothing but what Conſcience ſhall approve of, and what that ſhall Witneſs. But do you act more Wiſely; in all things; and at all times: In Health as well as Sickneſs; and in time of Life as well as in the Hour of Death, endeavour to keep a good Conſcience. Did Men live under the Senſe of an *Omnipreſent* and *Omniſcient* God, one part of their Life would not claſh with the other. Their Converſation would be in Heaven every Day. They would keep an Holy

Holy Intercourſe with God from time to time. Not ſometimes go forward in Religion and ſometimes backward, but be Juſt at all times, and always diſcharge a good Conſcience both towards God and Man.

And as God's *Omnipreſence* ſhould teach Men Uprightneſs and an exact Conſcientiouſneſs in all their Dealings; So,

III. It ſhould teach you Sincerity, Fervency and Intention in the Worſhip of God; and when you Pray to have your Thoughts and Affections wholly fix'd on him.

Enter into your Cloſet, ſhut the Door, and be as Secret as poſſible in your Prayer; yet that Father to whom ye Pray in Secret, ſeeth what you do in Secret.

It is a great neglect of God, an Affront to him, and a Contempt of his *Omniſciency*, for a Man to prattle Words, to ſpeak to God in Prayer, and not regard what he ſays. He is an *All-ſeeing Spirit*, and will be Worſhip'd as a *Spirit*, with your Souls, Heartily and Devoutly. Put it in a Temporal Caſe: Does any Man ſpeak unto a King, and at the ſame time not mind what he ſpeaks unto him? Would not this be a Contempt, and a kind of Mockery done to him? Now if this would be a great Irreverence to an Earthly Majeſty, what is it to the King of Kings to

Joh. 4. 24.

to be Pray'd to when your Minds are elſewhere, and without giving attention to thoſe Prayers ye put up to him? The God to whom ye Pray both ſees and obſerves the Frame and Connection, and Motions of your Thoughts; and if your Thoughts ſee not the Living God, who ſees them; and if your Hearts behold not the God that ſearcheth them, with what Face can ye expect Fruit of that Prayer, to which neither your Thoughts nor Hearts attended? Chriſt told the *Phariſees*, ſaying, *You outwardly appear Righteous unto Men, but within you are full of Hypocriſie and Iniquity. You are they that Juſtifie your ſelves, but God knoweth your Heart.* They made long Prayers to God, but their Hearts were not on him; ſomething elſe and not God was in their Thoughts, even in the height of their Devotion. If Men were acquainted with God's *Omniſciency* there would not be ſuch a thing as an *Hypocrite* in the World. No double hearted Perſon to halt between *God* and *Baal*, no ſerving *God* and *Mammon*, no painted Sepulchres, nor no counterfeit Piety to be found among Men. *Hypocriſie* is a Dangerous *Leaven*, and that which Chriſt bids Auditors *beware* of; he denounces many *Woes* againſt it, and it is repreſented to him as that which renders Men odious to the Lord, as endeavouring to Cozen God, and put a Cheat upon him.

Matt. 23. 18.

Luk. 16. 18.

Luk. 12. 1.

The *Hypocrite* goes about to Diſguiſe his Actions. He pretends to do his Maſter's Will, but yet

yet does it not. He Judges and Condemns other for having nothing of Heaven, when he himself has more of Hell than those Condemn'd by him. He talks much of God and Religion, lifts up his Eyes to Heaven, smites upon his Breast and thanks God he is not as other Men, and all this is done to be a Cloak to the vilest and most abominable Practices. If there be a worse place in Hell than another 'twill be the Portion of the *Hypocrites*. They set up for Godliness and yet go about to deceive God, and make him no better than *Baal*; as if he neither heard nor saw, or was asleep and the like.

And as God's *Omnipresence* should teach Men Sincerity, Fervency and Intention in the Worship of God, and when they Pray to have their Thoughts and Affections wholly fix'd on him. So,

IV. It may teach them Patience under the afflicting Hand of God, and administer Comfort to them in Wrongs and Injuries.

When a Man considers that he has God for an Eye Witness, that he sees all the Miseries and Calamities that befal him, and that he sees the Heart as we see one another's Face, this will make him that he will neither be Impatient under Afflictions, nor Angry and Restless in the Day of Adversity, nor Malicious and Revengeful under Persecutions, but will carry himself watchful

watchful and careful be Sincere in his Duties, and be afraid to murmur or repine againſt him whoſe Eye is always upon him. What does that Man care for Diſgrace, Ignominy, or Injuſtice who knows he has to do with a God, that beholds his Innocency and one Day will do him Right? As ſure as there is Wickedneſs on Earth there is Juſtice in Heaven. Holy *Job* had not the leaſt Trouble upon him when a load of falſe Accuſations look'd him in the Face; he was well aſſur'd he was under the All-ſeeing Eye of God, that he beheld his Integrity both to God and Man, and this kept up his Head, and ſupported him with Courage and Strength againſt all the Venome the Devil or Man could Spit againſt him. It pleaſed the Lord to bruiſe his only Son and put him to open Shame; yet when *He ſuffer'd, he threatned not, but committed himſelf to him that judgeth Righteouſly.* When St. *Paul* was brought before *Fælix* and others, *He knew in whom he believ'd, and that he was able to keep that which he had committed to him,* and when he receiv'd the Sentence of Death *He truſted in him that raiſeth from the Dead.* The Aſſurance the Primitive Chriſtians had, that they had to do with a God to whoſe Eyes all things were naked and open, embolden'd them under the ſharpeſt Sufferings, and made them triumph over the Rack, the Wheel and the Gibbet. Their being thrown to Wild Beaſts, Condemn'd to the Mines, brought to a Stake and there Burnt alive, Accus'd of Sacrilege, Sedition, Inceſt,

Murders, and many other Crimes and Miſdemeanours, did not in the leaſt diſcompoſe or make them ſhrink in the face of Danger, becauſe they were ſenſible they had to do with a God, whoſe Eyes were continually upon them, who was a Spectator of their Innocency, and would one Day Judge and Revenge their Cauſe. How Quietly, and with what compoſure of Soul, ſedateneſs of Spirit and calmneſs of Mind did St. *Stephen* fall aſleep, and that which occaſion'd it was, a ſeeing his Jeſus ſtanding at the Right-hand of God, beholding the bravery of his Faith, the conſtancy of his Soul, and his eminent Charity both to his own and his Saviour's Enemies. Whatever your Afflictions be, whatever Wrongs or Injuries you receive, if your Spirits be built upon this Principle, that all *Things are naked and opened unto the Eyes of God*, you cannot want Reſolution to ſubmit to his Will and Pleaſure, and to encounter and trample upon the greateſt Indignities which can be caſt upon you. What tho' a Man meets with Injuſtice in this World, 'tis but a ſhort time he has to live, and then at his Death the Judge of all the Earth will do him Right? A little time will bring all things to light, even the hidden things of Darkneſs, when the Honeſty of the Honeſt ſhall be ſet before him, and when the Knavery of the Knave ſhall look him in the Face to his Shame and Confuſion. God ſpeaking of the Tranſgreſſions of the Iſraelites, ſays, *Is not this laid up in ſtore with me and ſeal'd up among my Treaſures?* An Immunity from

Deut. 32. 34.

from preſent Puniſhment is no Argument that God either ſees not Mens Wickedneſs, or is not offended at them for it. Their Sins lie at their Door; Their Tranſgreſſions are ſealed up in a Bag; Their Foot ſhall ſlide in due time; God forgets them not; There is a Day of Accompt behind, and the longer God is bending and drawing his Bow, and taking his Aim, the longer he whets his Sword and fetcheth his Blow.

And as God's *Omnipreſence* may teach Men Patience in the Day of Adverſity and Adminiſter Comfort to them in Wrongs and Injuries; So,

V. It ſhould ſtir us up to be preſent with him and walk with him.

Walking with God denotes a Religious courſe of Life. *Noah was a juſt Man, and Perfect in his Generation, and Noah Walk'd with God.* So it is in the *Engliſh* Tranſlation, but in the *Greek* it is, *Enoch pleaſed God. Before his Tranſlation he had this Teſtimony, that he pleaſed God,* ſays the Author to the *Hebrews.* If God's Eye be always upon us, our Aim ſhould be to pleaſe him, ſo to do, and ſo to think, as if every Action and Thought was ſtill in God's Preſence. *Walking with God* has this meaning, ſo to Eye his Preſence that all our Thoughts, Words and Actions ſhould be to his Glory, to pleaſe him in our Converſation, to walk in his Paths, and to ſerve him in Holineſs and Righteouſneſs. As God continually ſees us,

Gen 6. 9.

Εὐρηκέναι.

Heb. 11. 5.

so we ought always to look upon him, and have a deep Apprehension of his *Omnipresence* and *Om-*
1 Psal. 139. *niscience.* As he knows our down Sitting and our Uprising; As he understands our thoughts afar of; As he is acquainted with all our ways; and as there is not a word in our Tongue, but he knows it altogether: So we ought to set this *Omniscient* God always before us, that we may walk before him, and order the frame of our Actions for his Honour. God looks upon you, and therefore he expects you should look upon him, set him before you, prepare your selves for his Company, and avoid what is offensive to him.
2 Chron. 15. 2. If God be with you, ye ought to be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if you forsake him, he will forsake you.

And as God's *Omnipresence* should stir us up to be present with him and walk with him; So,

VI. It should bespeak Terror to all that keep at a Distance from God, and desire not the knowledge of his ways, for God is their Enemy and
Amos. 9. 2. 3. such an Enemy as they cannot fly from. *Tho' they dig into Hell thence shall mine Hand take them, tho' they climb up to Heaven, thence will I bring them down. And tho' they hide themselves I will search them out, and I will set mine Eyes upon them for Evil and not for Good,* saith the Lord God. *Say not thou, I will hide my self from the Lord, for who thinks upon*
Eccles. 16. 17. *me from above? I shall not be known in so great a heap of People, for what is my Soul among such an infinite number of Creatures?*

O

O Fool! *Whither canſt thou go from God's Spirit? or whither canſt thou flie from his Preſence?* God is every where preſent. He is beyond any confinement or limitation. Shut up your ſelves in the darkeſt Dungeon, from thence he is not excluded. *The Darkneſs and Light to him are both alike.* As every one of us ſhall ſee him when he comes to Judgment, ſo he ſees every one of us here, and will Judge us then according to our Deeds, *give every one according to his Ways, and the Fruit of his doings.* There will be no eſcaping in the Croud. God hath reſerv'd to himſelf a Day to reckon with all Orders and Degrees of Men. None will be diſpens'd with. For as the Day is appointed in the which the whole World muſt come to Judgment; ſo likewiſe the Judge himſelf is *ordain'd* of God for that great and glorious Employment. And as God's *Omnipreſence* ſhould beſpeak Terrour to all that keep at a diſtance from God, and deſire not the knowledge of his ways; So,

Jer. 23. 24.

Pſal. 139. 11.

Jer. 17. 10.

Acts 17. 31.

VII. It may let us ſee a ground for his particular Providence. Let the thing be what it will, the Divine Providence has the diſpoſal of it. It is the Lord that gives, and it is the Lord that takes away. 'Tis neither this way nor that way, nor any way of Man, but 'tis God that putteth down one, and ſetteth up another. God Orders and Governs all things. Turn your Eyes which way you will, the Light of God's Providence ſhineth every where: Infinite Wiſdom cannot but ſee all things. *God is firſt and God is laſt. God is the*

Orpheus.

the beginning, and God is the middle of all things. His Eye never grows dim. All things were made by him. He is in Poſſeſſion of all, and he takes care of all. 'Tis no diſparagement to God to be every where concern'd. Tho' he be infinitely high, nothing is below his Care. He made the Earth we tread upon. And as he made it he ſtill preſerves it. As nothing is too great, ſo nothing is too little for God to be concern'd about. *Are*

Matth. 10.29. *not Two Sparrows Sold for a Farthing, and one of them ſhall not fall to the Ground without your Father?*

Muſculus. By *Sparrows* is meant all little Birds, ſo litttle that even Two are Sold for a Farthing; and yet their riſe and fall is minded and taken notice of by God. And if the fall of *Sparrows* be not without God's Providence, how much more the *Ways* of Man.

Laſtly. Let it be the Buſineſs of us all to live under the Sence of God's *Omnipreſence* & *Omniſcience.* Lead your Lives ſo, as if ye were fully convinc'd ye had to do with a God who is a Witneſs to all ye do, and will one Day Judge you for what ye have done. At all times, and in all Places, in all

Gen. 28. Ends, and in all Affairs ſay with *Jacob, God is here. Stand* therefore *in Awe and Sin not.* Let the Fear of God Rule in your Hearts. Keep always a Conſcience void of Offence towards God, and towards Man. Wrong no Man, Defraud no Man, Oppreſs no Man, and follow after Charity with all Men. Let nothing be done through Strife Revenge, or Malice. As much as in you

ou lies Live Peaceably with all Men. *God ſees,* ought to be a ſtrong motive to ſtir you up to *Juſtice* and *Fidelity*, to *Honeſty* and *Integrity*, to *Truth* and *Uprightneſs* in all your Actions. You cannot keep your Wickedneſs from him. He is a God of Wiſdom and cannot be deceiv'd. He is every where, and nothing can be hid from his Eye. He is a Juſt and Righteous God, and will do all things in ſtrict and clear Juſtice. Every Man here preſent is a Spectacle conſtantly expos'd to the View of God. *There is not any Creature that is not manifeſt in his Sight, for all things are Naked and Opened unto the Eyes of him with whom we have to do.*

Conſider, what has been ſaid, and the Lord give you Underſtanding in all things. Amen.

FINIS.

ADVERTISEMENT.

A Sermon againſt *Atheiſm*, Preach'd at the Pariſh-Church of St. *Martin* in the Fields, *Novemb.* 24. 1700. By THO. KNAGGS, M. A. and Chaplain to the Right Honourable FORD Earl of TANKERVILLE. *Publiſh'd at the Requeſt of ſeveral that heard it.* Printed for *Francis Fawcet*, at the *King's Head* and *Crown*, near *Durham-yard*, in the *Strand.* 1701.

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